

## Andrew Jackson to Tennessee Legislators, September 1, 1832, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO A COMMITTEE.<sup>1</sup>

1 Copy. No clue is found to the composition of this committee. It seems to have been a group of Eaton's friends in the Tennessee legislature.

September (?), 1832.

*Gentlemen*, Your communication of this date has been recd. Delicate, as the Subject is to which you refer, the respectable Source from whence it arises, and a conviction that candor on all occasions is most conducive to the good of mankind, as well as the individual interest of all who practice it makes it my duty simply to state the facts from which you can draw your own conclusions.

It is well known to you, that Major Eaton was called by me from his seat in the Senate to fill the office of Secretary of War, as a member of the first Cabinet under the present administration, which appointment he accepted with much reluctance. He was appointed from a knowledge of his ability and adequacy to the performance of the duties attached to that situation, but more especially to a well tried personal attachment and undeviating fidelity. In the course of the opposition which necessarily exists in all free Governments his faithfulness made him peculiarly obnoxious to the leaders of the opposition, and to all those secrete agents, who acted in consonance with their views. During the whole course of his acting in the performance of the duties assigned him the same inflexible and inviolable adherence to the public interest was by him observed. He was firm and faithful, which the most violent opposition, and the most artful laid plans to drive him

## Library of Congress

from the councils of the Executive could not shake. But it seemed to him that to attain the public happiness, and to enable the Executive to carry on the administration of the Government in the spirit it was conceived, that it was necessary that he should resign the office of Secretary of War. He did so, and perhaps [in] the annals of individual sacrifice rarely has [it] occurred that a more patriotic and judicious step was taken. As exempt from fault as ordinarily falls to the lot of man, at all times inviolably faithful to his duty and to the Executive and in his full confidence, in the opinion of this honest and patriotic man, it became necessary in the course of the opposition that he should resign for the Public good. Such self denial, is very rare, and cannot be too highly appreciated, as under such circumstances few could be found capable of it. It enabled the administration to progress by opening a way to such reformation as the public good imperiously required and called for. Upon this reform the nation has passed its verdict.

The question with the honorable [body] of which you are members, is simply this, Shall the enemies of the administration succeed in destroying a most useful and honest man, a citizen of your state, to attain their object by dividing weakening and embarrassing its friends? You answer no.

Mr. Grundy our present Senator has so far as I know ably supported the administration but it is for you to say whether the public interest will be best promoted by the election of Major Eaton in preference to Mr Grundy. It is not for me to judge of this, all I can or ought to do, is to bring to your view, the course of the Democracy of Newhampshire, when they put their favorite Woodbury aside and elected Mr Hill<sup>2</sup> who had been appointed to office and rejected by the Senate, as the most pointed rebuke the[y] could give to the outrage committed by the Senate by the rejection of Mr Hill who they had recommended to the office to which he had been appointed. To you the constitution has assigned this duty without any interference on my part, which I have and will continue to avoid.

<sup>2</sup> Levi Woodbury, U. S. senator 1825–1831; Secretary of the Navy 1831–1834; Secretary of the Treasury 1834–1841. Isaac Hill was second comptroller of the U. S. Treasury

## Library of Congress

I 1829–1830; U. S. senator from New Hampshire 1831–1836, chosen to succeed Woodbury.

All I can say is that should the Legislature elect Either it is believed the State will be ably served. If in the opinion of your honorable body it be necessary to elect Major Eaton to the Senate to shew the opposition that in their Career of destruction that they shall be essentially met and opposed in a greater degree, and the Executive in a greater degree strengthened I will at all times feel grateful for Mr Grundys faithful and patriotic services. It is with the Legislature to determine at this important crisis of our national affairs who shall be selected as their Senator of the three persons named, Major Eaton, Grundy or Foster.